

ABSTRACT

Featured are a method and apparatus for fixing adjacent vertebrae of a spine that avoids the need and associated problems with prior cage or straight rod and screw systems. Methods and apparatus of the invention utilize a new implant member, which preferably is arcuate. Preferred methods of the invention for stabilizing adjacent vertebrae of the spine, include steps of providing a positioning apparatus including two guide sleeves, each guide sleeve having a long axis and locating the two guide sleeves with respect to the adjacent vertebrae such that a vertex formed by the long axis of each guide sleeve is located in the intervertebral space for the adjacent vertebrae. The method further includes forming an aperture in each of the adjacent vertebrae using the guide sleeves and inserting an implant into the apertures formed in each of the adjacent vertebrae so that the implant extends between the adjacent vertebrae and through the intervertebral space. In an alternative method a cutting fixture including a pivot arm is secured to the adjacent vertebrae and a cutting device is secured to the pivot arm. The pivot arm and cutting device are configured and arranged so that rotation of the pivot arm about a particularly located pivot point allows the cutting device to form the aperture in each of the adjacent vertebrae. Another alternative method for fixing adjacent vertebrae of a spine includes the step of forming a common channel in and between the adjacent vertebrae and inserting a biscuit implant in the common so as to bridge between the adjacent vertebrae.